

Comments Regarding
Loss of Snake River Salmon

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Salmon are a beautiful, strong indicator species of clean, free-flowing river habitat. Their presence indicates the presence of many other species which are also endangered. We as a people used to think that salmon like all of the abundant resources of the Northwest were unending. Within 70 years, Americans in the Northwest succeeded in nearly decimating the abundant numbers of salmon through catching as many salmon as they could.

In the 30's & since we have succeeded in building over 5,500 dams of very large structures in the U.S. They succeeding in killing all the Atlantic salmon runs in the U.S. When we should have realized that we would do the same in the west, we didn't. We built the Grand Coulee dam & killed all the stocks to the North. No more June bugs - the largest of all the Pacific salmon.

The Bonneville Dam built a more effective fish ladder & allowed runs to be sustained up the Columbia & Snake. But then we built hundreds more! Some with effective ladders some without. But they all kill migrating smolts to from 7-15% at each dam through the turbines or through ~~or~~ poisoning with spillover.

Not only are the dams physical barriers, they create a series of lakes behind them with warm water, no current & low oxygen at the bottom where the smolts need to hide to avoid being eaten. These same lakes are also a severe barrier to up-going mature salmon.

Hatcheries and barging don't work. They are in fact harmful to wild salmon through competition for food & have return rates which continues to loose ground to make hatchery solutions headed only for extinction. Stop wasting all money!

It is obvious that dam removal is necessary. The science is clear it is just the political will that is lacking. You can try and tweak the numbers and study the salmon to death with barging, hatcheries & bypass systems but they won't save the Snake River salmon. Study bypass, spillway and other maneuvers on the Columbia River dams.

We care about our ecosystem. We need salmon to survive along with the other flora & fauna that occur in free-flowing rivers. If we lose it, we won't get it back. We lose an integral part of our Northwest heritage, we lose any future for sport or commercial fisheries & we lose money year after year. We care so much about the ecosystem that we obtained the ESA that states it is the law to protect endangered species. To fulfill that law we need to remove the 4 lower Snake River Dams.

The vast majority of us are willing to pay or conserve to make up for the loss of the 5% of electricity produced. I think there are many economic choices to help the irrigators (a very small number) & the barging system to transition to changed options & a changing river.

My son deserves salmon, The Native American tribes deserve salmon, ^{& whales}, The tuna in the ocean deserve salmon, ~~and~~ and the bears deserve salmon. There are only a handful of stretches of river that are 100 miles long in the entire country. We need to create natural rivers & the habitat they support.

Thank you!

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